

## Message Text

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47

ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15

CEA-01 L-03 H-02 PRS-01 PA-01 EUR-12 /103 W

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R 190955Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3885

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 10508

PASS AID/W

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ESCAP:OCON

SUB: ESCAP 32ND PLENARY: MEKONG COORDINATING COMMITTEE

REF: BANGKOK 7988

1. SUMMARY: SEVERAL ESCAP MEMBERS CONVENED AN INFORMAL MEKONG DISCUSSION SESSION ON APRIL 1 AFTER PLENARY REVIEW OF MEKONG COORDINATING COMMITTEE (CC) ACTIVITIES. MCC OPERATIONS THROUGH CY 1976 WAS MAJOR TOPIC. AFTER THE SESSION MCC EXEC AGENT SPECULATED HOW MCC MIGHT OPERATE, ASSUMING VIET NAM RETURNS TO FOLD AFTER ELECTIONS, IN THE CONTINUED ABSENCE OF THE KHMERS. SOME PRECEDENT EXISTS FOR CONSENSUES ACTION ON MATTERS NOT DIRECTLY AFFECTING PROJECTS WITHIN AN ABSENT MEMBERS GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES. END SUMMARY.

2. ON APRIL 1 AN INFORMAL MEETING OF INTERESTED ESCAP MEMBERS WAS HELD TO DISCUSS MEKONG ACTIVITIES. US DEL INFORMALLY ADVISED, BUT ELECTED NOT ATTEND. IN ATTENDANCE WERE LAO, THAI AND DUTCH DELS TO ESCAP ALONG WITH UNDP AND MCC EXEC AGENT. EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS CONTRIBUTED FOR CY 1976 OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES WAS PRIMARY CONCERN. DUTCH ASSIGNMENT OF JUNE 30, CONFIDENTIAL

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1976, CUT-OFF DATE ON \$250,000 CONTRIBUTION, REPORTED IN PARA 5,

REFTEL, APPARENTLY WAS NOT A NEW CONSIDERATION. DUTCH ONLY WAITED UNTIL ESCAP MEETING IN HOPE THAT MCC QUORUM WOULD EVOLVE; WHEN IT DID NOT THE DUTCH TACKLED THE CUT-OFF ON TO CONVEY SENSE OF URGENCY TO ALL MCC MEMBERS, BOTH PRESENT AND ABSENT.

3. WHEN LATER QUERIED ABOUT THE MCC FUTURE, EXEC AGENT VAN DER OORD REITERATED THAT THE KHMERS REMAIN THE ONLY REAL PROBLEM, BECAUSE HE EXPECTS THE VIETNAMESE TO REJOIN AFTER THEIR ELECTIONS. ASSUMING THAT THE KHMERS MAY NOT AGREE TO ATTEND AN MCC MEETING, BUT AT THE SAME TIME EXPRESS NO OBJECTION TO A MEETING, THE INTENSITY OF INTEREST OF THE OTHER THREE MEMBERS PROBABLY WILL BE THE KEY TO MCC SURVIVAL. THEIR POSITIVE ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL BENEFITS PLUS READINESS OF DONORS TO PROVIDE CONTINUING SUPPORT WILL PROBABLY OUTWEIGH THE NEED FOR ACTIVE KHMER PARTICIPATION. COMMITTEE HAS MET IN THE PAST WITHOUT THE KHMERS, PRODUCING QUOTE SENSE OF MEETING UNQUOTE RATHER THAN CLEARLY ARTICULATED DECISIONS.

4. THE JOINT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES FOR UTILIZATION OF THE RESOURCES OF THE LOWER MEKONG BASIN, ADOPTED BY ALLMCC MEMBERS IN 1975, REQUIRES A QUOTE PROJECT AGREEMENT UNQUOTE BETWEEN THE MOST DIRECTLY AFFECTED COUNTRIES PRIOR TO EXECUTION OF SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS. ONLY SUCH PROJECTS ON WHICH SPECIFIC KHMER CONCURRENCE REQUIRED ARE MULTI-PURPOSE SAMBOR AND STUNG TRENG PROJECT IN GKR/VN BORDER AREAS. FINAL ACTION COULD BE INITIATED TO BEGIN SAMBOR CONSTRUCTION AT ANY TIME (JAPANESE HAVE ALREADY STUDIED PROJECT FULLY), BUT SIZE OF STUNG TRENG UNDERTAKING TOO LARGE TO ANTICIPATE ANY NEAR TERM ACTIVITY. IN LIGHT OF THIS, ACTUAL NEED FOR IMMEDIATE KHMER PARTICIPATION IN MCC MEETING EITHER ACADEMIC OR POLITICAL. PREOCCUPATION WITH HIGHER PRIORITIES AND ABSENCE OF INDICATED DESIRE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN ANY EXTERNAL ASSOCIATIONS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY GOVERN KHMER ATTITUDE IN ANY EVENT.

5. EXEC AGENT MILDY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT SECRETARIAT'S PROSPECTS FOR SURVIVAL. BARRING ANY MORE SERIOUS DETERIORATION IN THAILAND'S RELATIONS WITH LAOS AND ASSUMING THAT VIET NAM SERIOUSLY PURSUES ITS INDICATED INTENTION TO BECOME INVOLVED IN MEKONG BASIN DEVELOPMENT AFFAIRS, THE SECRETARIAT MAY GAIN A NEW LEASE ON LIFE BEFORE THE DUTCH COMMITMENT EXPIRES  
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IN JUNE. THE POLITICAL ANGLING PROCESS THAT MUST TAKE PLACE IN THE INTERIM WILL REQUIRE CLOSE SCRUTINY.  
WHITEHOUSE

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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